

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Grenada School District

Application ID: 13AC145436

Program Name: The Grenada School District AmeriCorps Program

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant provides evidence of a strong need for tutoring services in math and reading and for activities that address illiteracy, poverty, and dropout prevention. The services would be provided for 1,015 students who attend the area's lower elementary, upper elementary, and middle schools.

(+) The applicant strongly describes the illiteracy rate and the lack of academic skills to illustrate the severity of the problem that warrants the requested program services. The area's unemployment and poverty rates are significantly higher than the state average and its dropout rate is nearly one in five.

(+) The applicant identifies sound information indicating that the target community is economically disadvantaged with a poverty rate of 29.2%, a high Free and Reduced Student Lunch program rate of 66.41%, and an unemployment rate higher than the state and nation.

(+) The target group was selected by consensus of the Tutoring Intervention Team using data from the Title I Surveys of Community Needs. There is a clear explanation and valid rationale for selecting this population to be served.

(+) The applicant provides clear information on how the slots will align with program design and activities. The 29 full-time Members will be allocated with 20 Members at the Lower Elementary, five at the Upper Elementary, and four at the Middle School.

(+) The applicant indicates AmeriCorps members are uniquely qualified to provide regular individual tutoring, and have the benefit of special training compared to existing staff and volunteers. The applicant provides strong evidence that the project would not be otherwise possible without AmeriCorps resources.

(+) The applicant clearly describes the AmeriCorps member activities, roles, and responsibilities. For example, each AmeriCorps member will tutor an average of 35 low-performing K-8 students in one-on-one or in small group sessions each school day using state approved reading and math intervention activities.

(+) The measurable impact is clearly described by the change of this District's 2007-2008 Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) score of 144 to a QDI score of 179 in the 2011-2012 school years. The increase in their QDI score is credited to the AmeriCorps members' tutoring interventions.

(+) The applicant presents a 2010 evidence-informed report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and a 1996-97 analysis of students in Chicago to provide support for the effectiveness of their intended AmeriCorps member intervention activities, that of one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions to K-8 low performing students.

(+) The applicant has supportive evidence to measure their growth from Benchmark Testing annually to offer an analysis of district wide accomplishments. The applicant comprehensively determined performance targets by a committee consisting of specialists, including teachers and interventionists. This indicates that a professional team was formed to study and identify a viable performance target based on data and research.

(-) The applicant did not present sufficient information about staff activities and roles

(-) The applicant did not provide adequate information on the projects the Members would conduct about illiteracy, poverty, and dropout prevention.